



Highlights

BUDGET EDITION | 2024 - 2025



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A mission-focused budget in a post-pandemic environment

On Tuesday, May 21, residents will consider a \$114.0 million budget for the 2024-25 school year which would maintain smaller class sizes and support the district's core values of academics, character, community and wellness.

The proposed 2024-25 budget includes a tax levy increase of \$2,303,572, or 3.25%, an amount BELOW the maximum allowable tax levy increase under the tax cap law. The budget totals \$114,037,534, a \$7,346,231 increase compared to the current budget. The budget plan does not incorporate any use of the district's fund balance.

Smaller class sizes, a priority over the last four years, would continue under the proposed plan. Elementary classes (K-5) average 19 students per section; classes in grades 6-12 average 21 students per section in core courses. Actual enrollment data and enrollment projections are used to adjust staffing levels for each grade level.

The 2024-25 budget plan balances students' needs against a backdrop of post-pandemic inflation. The proposed budget increase reflects higher costs of employee benefits, including prescription medicines and retirement contributions (up \$2,684,503, or 10.2%). Budgeted salary costs are down by 1.1%, or \$628,896 less than in the current year.

"Our students continue to rebound from the challenges of the pandemic, academically, socially and emotionally," said Superintendent Jody Monroe. "Guiding them on this path to success are teachers and staff committed to the district's mission of preparing all students to reach their potential, discover their purpose, and be engaged members of the community."

An increase in debt service costs (up \$3,210,682, or 43%) is partially offset by an increase in anticipated state building aid (up \$1,683,160, or 46%). The increase is due to the 2021 Capital Project, which is nearing completion this year, with more than 180 improvements across the district.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

2024-2025
PROPOSED
BUDGET
\$114,037,534

PROPOSED
BUDGET
INCREASE
**\$7,346,231
or 6.89%**

TAX LEVY
INCREASE
3.25%

Budget Vote:

- Tuesday, May 21
- 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- BCHS Gym A

Board of Education Election (to fill two open board seats):

- Lauren Grasso
- Katherine Nadeau
- Jason MacLaughlin

Candidates are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

ESTIMATED TAX RATE CHANGES:

Town of Bethlehem

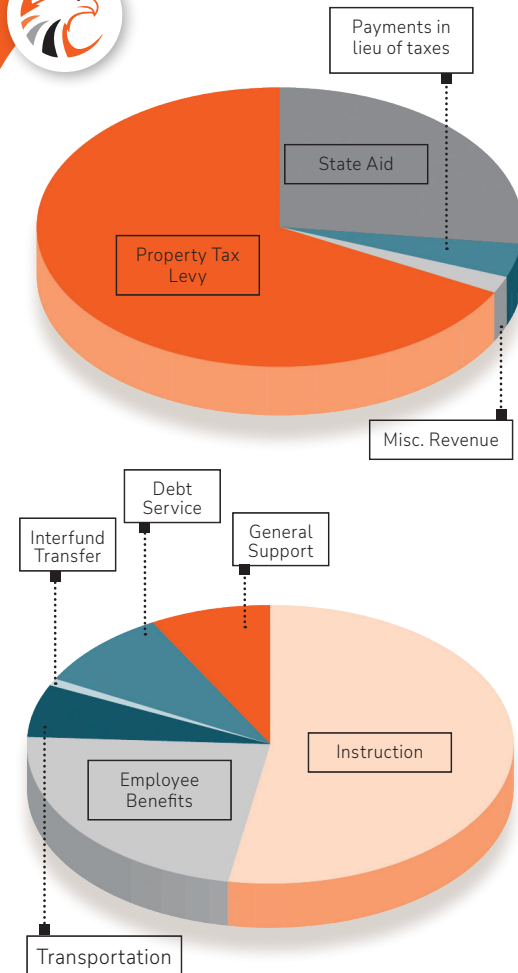
+3.25% or \$70 more per \$100k

Town of New Scotland

+3.32% or \$73 more per \$100k



-MORE BUDGET DETAILS INSIDE



Where the money comes from...

Estimated Revenues	2023-24 BUDGET	2024-25 PROPOSED	% OF TOTAL REVENUES
State Aid (all sources)	\$30,297,234	\$33,381,560	29.3%
Use of Fund Balance	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Payments in Lieu of Taxes	\$3,885,000	\$3,855,000	3.4%
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$1,684,104	\$3,672,437	3.2%
Property Tax Levy	\$70,824,965	\$73,128,537	64.1%
Total Revenues	\$106,691,303	\$114,037,534	100%

BUDGET VOTE:
Tuesday, May 21

VOTE IN PERSON
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
High School Gym A

Where the money goes...

Proposed Expenditures	2023-24 BUDGET	2024-25 PROPOSED	%CHANGE
Instruction (51.2% of budget)	\$56,527,093	\$58,327,453	3.18%
Employee Benefits (25.4% of budget)	\$26,285,018	\$28,969,521	10.21%
Student Transportation (5.7% of budget)	\$6,763,661	\$6,573,404	-2.81%
Interfund Transfers (0.4% of budget)	\$514,000	\$434,000	-15.56%
General Support (8.0% of budget)	\$9,189,946	\$9,110,889	-0.90%
Debt Service (9.3% of budget)	\$7,411,585	\$10,622,267	43.32%
Total Expenditures	\$106,691,303	\$114,037,534	6.89%

Universal Pre-Kindergarten lottery is May 31 - See back panel for details
Anticipated 36 spots for eligible students born between 12/2/2019-12/1/2020

2024-25 budget questions and answers

Q.	What will the impact of the budget be on my 2024-25 tax bill?
A.	The 2024-25 school tax rate for residents of the town of Bethlehem is estimated to increase 3.25%, or \$70 more per \$100,000 of assessed value. In the town of New Scotland, the school tax rate is estimated to increase 3.32%, or approximately \$73 more per \$100,000 of assessed value. These are estimates only. The tax rate is determined by several factors including the school district tax levy, the total assessed value of properties in a municipality, and the annual equalization rates set by the state of New York. Final rates are set in August.
Q.	How does the district decide to add or reduce teaching positions as part of the budget?
A.	The district consistently looks at enrollment, the needs of students and course demand when making adjustments to staffing. The proposed 2024-25 budget prioritizes small class sizes. The budget ADDS 3.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) special education teachers to meet the needs of students and to expand the continuum of special education services K-12. At the high school, there is a reduction of 5.7 FTE vacant teaching positions. These positions will be vacant following several retirements this year. These reductions are based on enrollment and will have no impact on students or class sizes, which average 21 students in core courses at BCHS. Enrollment districtwide has declined 20% over the last 20 years. Enrollment in grades 9-12 has been the most volatile during this period, until 2016-17 when enrollment at the high school began a more consistent decline. Five-year enrollment projections prepared for the district by the Capital District Planning Commission show that while enrollment in grades K-8 will likely remain steady or increase slightly over the next five years, projected enrollment in grades 9-12 will decline by another 8.1% between now and 2027-28. There is also a reduction of 2.0 FTE vacant teaching positions (one elementary and one BCMS/BCHS) based on enrollment projections. All reductions of teaching positions in the budget will be accomplished through attrition, where a position is not filled after a person retires.



ON THE BALLOT BUS PROPOSITIONS

BUS PURCHASE PROPOSITION

New York State requires the district to receive voter approval to borrow money for capital expenditures, such as bus purchases.

A bus proposition will appear on the May 21 ballot as a separate proposition from the school budget.

The proposal would allow the district to purchase six vehicles, including three 70-passenger electric buses and three small gas-powered buses for student transportation, at a cost not to exceed \$1,225,000. This amount is estimated to be the maximum cost of the six vehicles after receiving grants and before state aid. Approximately 66% of the borrowing cost for the purchase is covered by state aid, resulting in a final maximum cost to the district of roughly \$416,500 for the six vehicles.

The expenditure of funds on the three electric vehicles is contingent on voucher/grant funding from the state and/or federal government. New York State is requiring school districts to have a fully electrified bus fleet by 2035. If grant funding is unavailable for the electric vehicles, the district would only purchase the three gas-powered vehicles this year under this proposition.

2024 BUS PURCHASE RESERVE FUND

To allow the district to save for future bus purchases, voters will decide on a proposition to create a bus purchase reserve fund.

If approved, the district could set aside up to a maximum of \$15,000,000 (plus interest earnings) over 15 years to pay for buses and related equipment and expenses. This reserve fund would allow the district to save money incrementally for future purchases.

School District Budget Notice

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$106,691,303	\$114,037,534	\$111,733,962
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		\$7,346,231	\$5,042,659
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		6.89%	4.73%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount	\$70,824,965	\$73,128,537	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	N/A	N/A	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	N/A	N/A	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	N/A	N/A	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$70,824,965	\$73,128,537	\$70,824,965
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$3,175,738	\$4,907,621	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$68,184,061	\$69,660,925	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$67,649,227	\$68,220,916	
I. Difference: G - H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$534,834	\$1,440,009	
Administrative Component	\$10,098,719	\$10,085,506	\$9,670,465
Program Component	\$81,705,998	\$85,697,477	\$84,438,570
Capital Component	\$14,886,586	\$18,254,551	\$17,624,927

*A contingency budget would result in a reduction of approximately \$2.3M in budgetary appropriations including the potential elimination of new or upgraded equipment, curtailing of professional development and inservice training allocations, elimination of vacant instructional positions which may result in increased teacher to student ratios or limitations in course availability, decreases to student supplies can resources and delayed implementation of information of information, technology and security safeguards.

** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Bus Purchase	\$1,225,000

Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year

Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of Bethlehem)	\$558
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹ (Town of New Scotland)	\$532

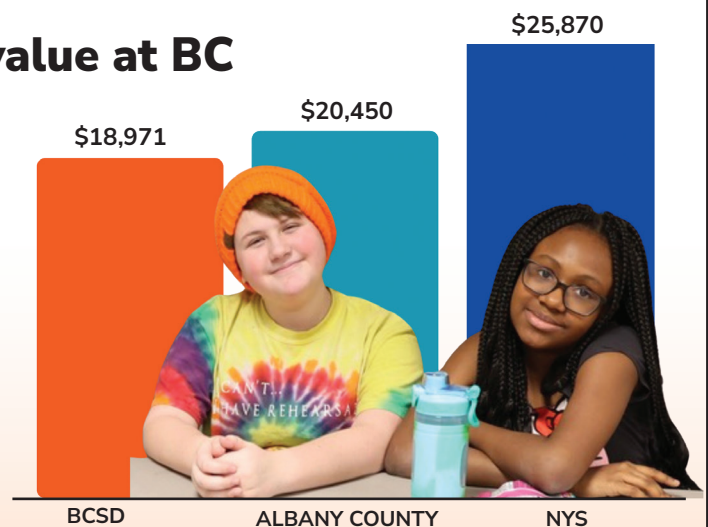
The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Bethlehem Central School District, Albany County, New York, will be held at Bethlehem Central High School in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 7:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the school district, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine. Absentee ballots must be received by 5 p.m. on May 21, 2024.

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Education and value at BC

According to the most recent data from the NYS Education Department, per pupil spending in the Bethlehem Central School District is \$1,479 LESS than the average per pupil spending by districts in Albany County and \$6,899 LESS than the average per pupil spending of districts in New York State.

Source: 2021-22 NYS Education Department Report Card





BETHLEHEM CENTRAL BY THE NUMBERS

2

Eva Ho and Isha Narang have been named 2024 National Merit Scholarship winners. It is the first time in many years two BC students have won the prestigious honor. Only 2,500 students nationwide are National Merit Scholars. Seven other seniors were National Merit Finalists including Ryan Sood, Grace Chrapowitzky, Fay Hu, Edward Martin, Eleanor Benzing, Norina Zhang, and Justin Mo.

3

Three BCHS students were chosen to represent Capital Region BOCES Career & Technical Education during the statewide SkillsUSA competition in Syracuse.

Testing their skills against the state's best were Yousif Alsammarraie, Network Cabling Technology; Sophia Berlin, Global Fashion; and Elliott Martinez, Network Technology.

12

At the NYS Forensic League State Championship in April, Molly Wladis was one of only 12 Lincoln-Douglas debaters in NYS to make it to the tourney's elimination rounds. From there, Molly won every round, earning the BC junior the title of 2024 NYS Intermediate Lincoln-Douglas Debate Champion.

32

This year, 32 Technology Helpdesk student interns at BCHS have been gaining real-world experience as the first stop for tech support at the high school. The BC Helpdesk is a model for schools across the country. These talented students also bring their troubleshooting skills out into the community to help senior citizens navigate new technology.

66

Bethlehem is ranked the #1 school district in the Capital Region by Niche. BC is also ranked by Niche as #66 in the nation on the list of Districts with the Best Teachers in America.

484

Nearly 500 student-athletes from BCMS and BCHS are participating in a variety of spring sports, including the new girls flag football team. Drop by and cheer them on! You can follow all athletics on Twitter @BCSDAthletics. Go Eagles!



Oh say can you see the BCMS choir perform at arena

On Mar. 7, the Bethlehem Central Middle School Select Choir, led by teacher Katie Daly, performed for basketball fans at the MVP Arena in downtown Albany. The group was featured singing the National Anthem at a Siena College men's basketball game. BCSD has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for districts with outstanding achievement in providing music access and education to all students.



The show must go on, and so it did

When Mother Nature knocked out power to much of Delmar the weekend of Mar. 23-24, the Stage 700 lights were shining bright. More than 100 students brought Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street to life on stage and wowed audiences with four outstanding performances at Bethlehem High School. Bravo!



BC Eagle Challenge/Wellness Fair is Saturday, May 18

The Eagle Challenge, a community event, returns for a second year with added activities that include a run/walk challenge, a Health & Wellness Fair, a Touch-a-Truck event, an obstacle course on the new turf field and much more. The Eagle Challenge will be held from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on May 18 at the high school. The Delmar Farmers Market has moved to the high school this year, so make a morning of it!



Glenmont team is "First in Math"

Congratulations to Glenmont first-grade students James, Addison and Jackson! The trio are regional winners in the First in Math elementary mathematics competition. The team received trophies and Glenmont Elementary School will receive a plaque and a \$1,000 prize from the NYS Education Department. The team will compete for the state title in June in the championship First in Math tourney.



Celebrating Unified Bowling together

On Mar. 14, BC's Unified Bowling team celebrated another successful season with supportive faculty and staff who joined the team for some bowling action of their own. Unified sports support teams of students with and without developmental disabilities. In addition to bowling, BC has a Unified Basketball team and new in the 2024-25 budget is a Unified Bocce team that will make Unified sports year-round.



Not that we're counting or anything

Elementary schools across the district are known to celebrate the 100th day of school with festive and fun activities that involve math skills, creativity, and sometimes even hair and makeup. At Eagle, students and staff do their best to look 100 years old. For those who may be counting down to the end of the school year, we have good news: there are approximately 30 days until the last day of school.



New cell phone policy at BCHS finds success

Bethlehem Central High School looks and sounds a little different this year thanks to new cell phone-free policy intended to reduce distractions, improve peer relations and encourage a healthy school climate. Use the QR code above to hear from students and staff (some who were skeptical about the change) about how it has been going.



ALANA promotes cultural exchange, understanding

Students of the BCHS chapter of ALANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Native American & Allies) work hard all year to promote a climate of respect at the school. In February, ALANA honored an unsung hero of the civil rights movement, Claudette Colvin, as part of Black History Month. ALANA will host an Asian Food Festival this month on May 17 at 5:30 p.m. at BCHS. The annual event is always a sell-out so get there early.



A party for everyone that was out of this world

The April 8 eclipse was celebrated in style at Bethlehem Middle School, where students had the opportunity to stay after school to witness the celestial event with their friends, classmates, faculty and staff. Every student in the school district was provided a pair of eclipse viewing glasses courtesy of the Bethlehem Public Library.



ON THE BALLOT BOARD ELECTION

Lauren Grasso



Lauren Grasso of Delmar is seeking a first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 10 years, Grasso is chief risk officer for the NYS Department of Tax & Finance. Grasso is also a parent of two children: a student at Slingerlands Elementary and a student at the middle school.

Katherine Nadeau



Katherine Nadeau of Delmar is seeking a second term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 11 years, Nadeau is deputy director of the not-for-profit Catskill Mountainkeeper. Nadeau is also a parent of two children: a student at Elsmere Elementary and a student at the middle school.

ELECT TWO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

In-person voting at BCHS in Gym A Tuesday, May 21 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

REMINDER

There will be **NO SCHOOL** on **Friday, May 24** due to fewer snow days used than were expected. Offices will also be closed.

Jason MacLaughlin



Jason MacLaughlin of Delmar is seeking a first term on the Board of Education. A district resident for 2.5 years, MacLaughlin is manager of clinical applications at Berkshire Health Systems. MacLaughlin is also a parent of four children: a college student; two students at the high school and a student at the middle school.



In April 2024, Bethlehem Central High School was ranked the **#1** high school in the Albany area by U.S. News and World Report in the publication's 2024 Best High Schools Report.

AMERICA IS YOU NEW U.S. CITIZENS CELEBRATED AT BCHS



Heartwarming. Inspiring. Eye-opening. BCHS celebrated 35 individuals who were officially sworn in as U.S. citizens on April 12. New York State Lieutenant Gov. Antonio Delgado was guest speaker and U.S. District Court Justice Mae A. D'Agostino oversaw the proceedings along with BCSD Superintendent Jody Monroe. The contributions of BC students made the day extra special with a speech by BC junior Marwa Al Essa about her journey from her native Iraq to U.S. citizenship, poems by Slingerlands students Agam Amsterdamer and Mahya Alawy, a Pledge of Allegiance led by Korbin Patschreck and beautiful music by student pianist Will Lauricella and the BCHS and Eagle Elementary choral ensembles. Thank you to the social studies department, art department, music department and high school staff for coordinating this special experience.



Budget plan includes \$100,000 for added door security at middle school

The proposed 2024-25 budget includes a \$100,000 capital outlay for a new Avigilon Door Status Monitoring System at the middle school. The new alert system would immediately alert staff if an exterior door is propped open or ajar during the school day. The alert system allows for a prompt response so the door can be closed and locked or repaired, if needed.

The same monitoring system was installed at the high school this year after it was approved by voters as part of the budget last May.

The door alert system is integrated with the Avigilon security camera and access control systems which are used across the district.

The Avigilon door alert system will be installed at the elementary schools using the district's general operational fund.



LINQ CONNECT REPLACING MYSCHOOLBUCKS

A new system for paying for school lunch and school purchases is coming to BC in May. Parents and guardians should stay tuned to ParentSquare for all information about the new system that provides convenience for buying lunch and other items at school.

A closer look at tax rates...

Estimated Tax Rates

PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUE (ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST CENT)

	2023-24 FINAL	2024-25 ESTIMATED	% CHANGE
Town of Bethlehem	\$21.61	\$22.31	3.25%
Town of New Scotland	\$21.90	\$22.63	3.32%

Tax rates for 2024-25 are estimates only. Often the tax rates differ between towns because of equalization rates set by the New York State Office of Real Property Services. The equalization rate for the Town of Bethlehem is currently at 71% (down from 75%). The equalization rate for the Town of New Scotland is currently at 70% (down from 74%). The district sets final tax rates in August, after the towns finalize assessment figures and the state confirms equalization rates. The rates and estimated changes shown here DO NOT reflect any STAR or other tax exemptions that may reduce individuals' school tax bills.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PROPOSED 2024-25 BUDGET

Classroom Instruction

- Add 3.0 FTE special education teachers to expand the continuum of services for students K-12
- Reduce 5.7 FTE vacant teaching positions in math, science and social studies at the high school based on enrollment (reduced through attrition following retirements)
- Reduce 1.0 FTE vacant world language position at the high school/middle school based on enrollment (reduced through attrition following retirement)
- Reduce 1.0 FTE elementary teacher based on enrollment (reduced through attrition following retirement)
- Increase supply budget for physical education

Student Support Services & Student Opportunities

- Add funding to meet NYS obligations for providing services to post-grad students with disabilities

- Reduce costs associated with regular season athletics ticket sales; there will be no cost to attend future regular-season athletics contests
- Add professional development funding for Multi-Tier Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Add new athletics opportunities for girls (flag football and wrestling)
- Add Bocce to Unified Sports options for students with and without disabilities
- Replace aging gymnastics equipment (vault, uneven bars)
- Add two audiometer machines for hearing screenings by school nurses
- Increase funds for elementary building school supplies
- Add student club opportunities at the middle school (running club and computer club)
- Reduce 5.0 FTE aides to students with disabilities based on students' needs (these positions are currently unfilled)

- Reduce services provided by Saratoga Center for the Family based on decreasing demand
- Embed Transition Services/School to Work coordination for high school students with disabilities as a district-based services, eliminating the need for an outside consultant

Technology, Transportation, Facilities & Human Resources

- Replace sign at front of high school (Delaware Ave. side)
- Digitalize employee records to improve efficiency, recordkeeping
- Reduce 1.0 FTE telematics specialist in the transportation department
- Reduce 1.0 FTE senior systems administrator in the technology department
- Reduce COVID emergency supplies
- Install Avigilon door alert system at BCMS

A refreshed BCMS Library Media Center (LMC)

The voter-approved 2021 Capital Project, which included 150+ improvements across the district will be completed in 2024. One of the priority projects was the renovation and modernization of the Library Media Center at the middle school.

The LMC is lighter and brighter with flexible seating areas, instructional spaces, a new circulation desk and areas for students to gather and collaborate on projects, study sessions and much more.



New Middle School Library Media Center



700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, New York 12054

Board of Education

- Holly Dellenbaugh, President
- Meredith Moriarty, Vice President
- Willow Baer
- Ewan McNay, Ph.D.
- Katherine Nadeau
- Robert Tietjen
- John Walston

Superintendent of Schools

Jody Monroe

Deputy Superintendent

David Hurst, Ph.D.

Chief Business and Financial Officer

John McPhillips

ECRWSS POSTAL CUSTOMER

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UPK lottery scheduled for May 31

New Universal Pre-Kindergarten partnership will serve 36 students in the 2024-25 school year

The Bethlehem Central School District plans to partner with a local organization to provide a pre-kindergarten program in 2024-25 for up to 36 eligible four-year-olds at no cost to families. It is the first time the district will offer an instructional program for four-year-olds. The new program would have no impact on the 2024-25 school district budget. The UPK program is funded with state aid.

TSL Adventures is a Capital Region childcare provider that is opening a new Delmar location in 2024. TSL Adventures was selected as the district's UPK partner for 2024-25 after the district issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a high quality, developmentally appropriate program to help 4-year-olds get ready for kindergarten. TSL was the only organization to qualify to provide pre-kindergarten in the district as part of the RFP process.

Seats in the UPK program will be filled through a lottery process. Selection will be random. The application window opened May 1 and will close May 24. The lottery will be held on Friday, May 31.

To be eligible, a child must have been born between Dec. 2, 2019 and Dec. 1, 2020. Children who are not placed in the program initially will be placed on a waiting list and families will be contacted if space becomes available throughout the year.

The district will continue to pursue similar partnerships with local organizations to expand the UPK offering as long as state funding remains available in future years. More information can be found on the district website at bethlehemschools.org.

If you are a BCSD resident and have a child born between 12/2/2019 and 12/1/2020, learn how to enter the UPK lottery for 2024-25

Scan the QR code below or visit bethlehemschools.org for more information



Budget voting information

To vote, you must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of the Bethlehem Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote. You do NOT need to be registered to vote.

- Vote in person on Tuesday, May 21 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Bethlehem Central High School in Gym A
- Absentee ballots and early voting ballots are available from the district clerk. Early ballot voting for any qualified school district voter is new this year. Similar to absentee ballot voting, you must fill out an application to vote early. For an application, email voterinfo@bethlehemschools.org or call 518-439-7098. Completed ballots must be received by district clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the election.



ANNUAL BUDGET & BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION IS TUESDAY, MAY 21

- Proposed budget for the 2024-25 school year
- Two members of the Board of Education
- Bus purchase proposal & bus purchase reserve fund